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A WAY TO BELIEVE IN AMERICA

by John D. Montgomery

"I never saw such a useless damned war in all my life", was one GI's explosive summary of Army reaction in Korea. Korea is far off; a year ago nobody thought it would be important enough to defend with thousands of American lives.

This is not a strange reaction for American fighting men to have, unfortunately. Army studies show that only 5 per cent of our World War II soldiers could provide any idealistic justification for the War. And any honest American must add from his own observations that we were as idealogically unprepared for victory in 1945 as we are temperamentally unprepared for conquest in 1950.

What shall we say of the ideals that we stand for? Is it no longer intellectually respectable to believe in the American Way of Life? Or can some common creed be found underlying the criss-cross of sentiment, oratory, prejudice, and politics that make up our civilization?

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The American Way of Life means the freedom to live fully. It is not "political", or "economic", or "social": it surges across those artificial barriers of social science. It drowns out our dusty academic words in a flood of human experience and achievement. It sweeps out of sight, too, the petty niggling of politicians; and it plunges far deeper than the sentimental home town talk of election-year campaigns. We ourselves are unwittingly degrading our own nation with those pat radio commercials which assert with spurious emotion that "Freedom is everybody's job". Our very achievements, spiritual and material, ought to make us ashamed to advertise freedom as if it were a toy balloon, or to define our principles of civilization as if they were only a kind of profit-and-loss statement. Our nation ought not tally up its progress so easily: surely our destiny has too much greatness and strength in it for such a pitiful reckoning.

II

Greece and Turkey, and the Philippines and Korea have reminded us that the American theory is being exported. There have been a few to suggest that these are outposts, or "spheres of influence" -- protectorates of an expanding American imperialism. And it is true that the dynamic character of our Democracy, whether fighting under the flag of the

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United Nations or pursuing peaceful paths at home, has brought it into daily competition with Communism. Many areas of the world which had previously been insulated against both of these great forces are now a battleground of Communism versus Capitalism. This expansion and the resultant deadly competition have led neutrals to regard both Communism and Democracy as new imperialisms, and to deplore "Elizabethan piracy" or "old-fashioned empire-building", which is crushing innocent neutrals to extinction wherever East meets West.

There is, however, an essential differance between this expansion and that of the Khans, the Napoleons and the Rhodeses of the past. For one thing, territories and subjugated peoples are only incidental prizes to the contenders of today: ours is primarily a struggle of ideas. In their exported version, neither the Russian nor the American system represents its original faithfully enough to afford a real basis for comparison: by their fruits they cannot be known. Worse yet, it is the nature of the democratic American process to move slowly; it is far more difficult of realization than the Russian system. Our overseas samples provide too many demonstration models that are worse than those of our chief competitors.

This makes all the heavier the burden we must place on the American ideal itself; for our goals of freedom and progress are vaporous promises in comparison with the overnight revolutions which the Communists everywhere promise and sometimes actually accomplish. Yet the fact is that in the clash of ideals, and in their fulfillment, the American product is overwhelmingly superior.

III

A comparison of the American ideal of civilization with that of the Soviet Union makes one point immediately apparent: the Soviet theory sprang full-blown, like Pallas from the head of Zeus. It came ready-made, packaged for delivery, with clever slogans first hawked by its gifted inventor, Karl Marx. The American theory, on the other hand, emerged slowly, pragmatically, by a process of trial and error. It is still an area of disagreement, for unlike the Russian brand of Utopia, ours is achieved in each age: it is first demonstrated in history, and only afterwards do we begin to explain it. On the other hand, the Communist goal, after a century of theory, still exists in blueprints only. Now and then there have been great accomplishments where a Five-Year Plan is realized in certain specialized fields. But the major accomplishments of Communism have covered half the globe with human misery and the other half with the threat of war.

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The American is hard pressed if he has to explain and describe his freedom: it's in our "bourgeois" family life, in our "outmoded" churches, our "depraved" radio and TV programs, our "useless" political tirades. But the Russian is equally hard pressed to find the freedom he extolls so offensively: his freedom is in the collective farms on which he labors from dawn to sunset in exchange for subsistence; in the right to work at a job assigned according to the needs of the State; in the liberty to speak his mind freely so long as his words are in praise of the Communist ideal.

We have created without explaining; the Communists have been more successful in describing Utopia than in creating it.

A second difference is in the ideals themselves. In one case, there are great pretensions to the "classless society" which levels all of humanity in the interest of all; in the other, the work of each man is encouraged as a means of bringing to ultimate fulfillment the greatest potential of each. One ideal promises by the coordinated efforts of all to build a brave new world; the other, through the voluntary exertions of all men working in their own behalf, would bring to fullest realization the capacities of each one, great and small.

In their means of progressing, these two ways of life are roads that never meet. The one presents its "scientific" outlines of "truth" (in its current Kremlin interpretation) and demands that all investigation demonstrate the consistency and correctness of this image. The other makes no pretense of absolute knowledge, but progresses through repeated victories over error. Under the one system, the announcement of an upsetting discovery in any field of knowledge is a guaranteed brand of suicide; while in the other it is the surest way to success. One is dogmatic, the other pragmatic.

IV

The Russian system offers guidance, some very specific direction, and the services of military and political "technicians", to all prospective customers. Its tightly-knit compactness is adequate to any emergency (provided, of course, it is a "planned" emergency). A sudden crisis may require interpretation and perhaps policy changes at the Kremlin, but it would always be explicable, for in Marxism no basic uncertainty is possible.

Spokesmen for America falter and offer tentative explanations, because their theories must first be publicly announced, and then tested and approved in the political laboratory, before they can be generally

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accepted. An American who makes a mistake may have made a valuable contribution by disclosing error to the public gaze, and his mistakes may help himself and others to discover truth.

The image of American society is not classless: we encourage classes, whether according to belief or occupation or bank statement; we desire each man to choose his own associates and manner of living. The American program is classless only in the opportunities which it would afford equally to all. Even prejudice is not banished here: it is tolerated and sometimes approved, where its effects work no harm to the total Society which has created it.

Some people have argued that the American Way of Life can be demonstrated by a neat chart showing how much longer a Russian worker must labor to earn enough to buy a pair of shoes. Such a comparison proves nothing about our way of life except that we produce and distribute shoes better than the Russians do. Our real element of superiority is not in the material realm at all -- our great wealth is only a symptom of our creative freedom.

Ours is no paradise, but it is a land where a man can choose to lead a good life or not, as he sees it. When David Lilienthal is harassed beyond his patience by Senator McKeller, he speaks out eloquently in defense of his American creed; when F. D. Roosevelt lists only four basic freedoms, Herbert Hoover vigorously calls attention to the Fifth Freedom.

No man or legislature is credited with knowledge that only God can have; but all men may aspire to the divinity of truth, achieving in their own time a knowledge sufficient to glimpse the destiny that awaits free men.

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> Lincoln said: "With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan -- to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, among ourselves and with all nations."

John D. Montgomery is Chairman of the Department of Government at the Babson Institute of Business Administration. "A Way to Believe in America" is an excerpt from his forthcoming book America: Destiny and Progress.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VII, No. 49

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA LIBRARIES DEC 14 1950 GENERAL

By Frank C. Hanighen December 6, 1950

THE CRISIS IN WASHINGTON: We learn from the Administrative Secretary of one western Senator that his office has received 25 letters in one day, demanding the impeachment of President Truman. Whether or not this example is typical, it is a fact, well known to reporters on Capitol Hill that there is a large volume of mail from constituents who demand Mr. Acheson's resignation. Each succeeding day raises the temperature of these communications.

Now, the demands to oust Truman are probably of no importance. It is absurd to envisage any serious move to impeach the Chief Executive. So all serious observers admit, yet it is noticeable that, having said this, they continue to speculate on what would happen. We heard one such individual go on to reason that of course Barkley would be no better, but that the center of power would then move to Capitol Hill. But who would be the Thaddeus Stevens? Our friend decided it would be Speaker Sam Rayburn. And then he went on to say, "It's ridiculous to talk about impeachment", etc. The significance of this talk is that many people feel that in this crisis, we lack really competent leadership.

These whiffs of steam may mean little, unless colossal events abroad bring public temper to a new high. Senator McCarthy, as every well-bred editorial writer or commentator knows, is always wrong. But he has some sixth sense as to what agitates the people. Therefore, when he talked impeachment, he may well have been the conductor of murmurs from the people. Has the White House heard such murmurs?

No word to date comes from behind the walls where Truman and Attlee confer. But there is intense speculation among the observers. They know well that a strong appeasement policy is being urged: the tip-off was a restatement of the old "sell out China" line in the Washington Post (December 2). If evacuation takes place, can Truman offer the people diplomatic appeasement on top of military defeat? No one here answers in the affirmative.

The necessity of evacuation is gravely discussed by military leaders whose views we have asked. They believe it is inevitable -- and all think that from a purely military point of view, we should not try to return to the Korean peninsula. But there are political considerations. It is recalled that during the most critical phase of last summer when a Dunkirk seemed possible, members of Congress felt that the American public would welcome no other plan than to fight our way back into Korea. The more observers study this painful situation, the more they are convinced that Truman faces difficult alternatives. Will he rise to this supreme occasion?

If he does not, he may leave the country leaderless -- as indeed it has apparently been for a week. One analysis of this might be expressed as follows -- it is a case of Truman or Taft. For instance, a western publisher described to us the state of mind of his community: bewildered, confused, not panicky but worried, and with no confidence in the President. "They are waiting", he remarked, "for some other voice to tell them what they want to hear." Yesterday, Senator Taft demanded that the President tell the people the "facts". Tomorrow -- ? If the Senator from Ohio has the ability to say just the right thing, we may have the strange situation in which a member of Congress transcends the President as the leader to whom the people look. If neither he nor Truman has the Word, we are indeed in for dark days.

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CRISIS AMONG THE PLANNERS: The professional planners -- economic and military -- are just as confused in their ideas for coping with the emergency as the White House politicians. The menace of inflation at present is being met merely with credit controls. Compulsory price and wage controls are still many months away -- National Security Resources Chairman Symington gives intimation they may be imposed April 1. The Federal Reserve Board will not give in to pleas for easier credit curbs; Symington feels present attempts at controls through restrictions on credit should be given more chance, and also that the Defense Department should have a chance to say just what it wants before the nation's economy is plunged into a straitjacket. But the Department does not appear to know. From its vantage point the condition of national defense and military readiness presents probably the most appalling debacle in national history. They seem to be gambling that the Kremlin does not intend to start all-out war now, and that possibly the Chinese Reds can be appeased and placated.

Cold fact is there is no over-all policy, either for military guidance or for rearming the country. Billions poured out by Congress for rearming for five years have been squandered in salaries and compensation for swollen government payrolls, and for personnel that adhered to wishful thinking, made no decisions and fought over pet programs of each branch of the service. Money recently given by Congress has already been soaked up in considerable degree by soaring "fifth round" wage increases, and more money becomes most urgent.

Mr. Truman claims to be holding off on positive steps in Korea, or even in immediate all-out rearmament, while he searches around for some "new facts". The implication is he has not had very many facts at any time. He has nothing to say on the token forces which other UN "allies" have to offer in the grim war in Korea.

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CONGRESS WANTS TO ACT: Indicative of the rising temper of Congress and the desire, amid the confusion, to advance proposals for taking care of the military situation, are two resolutions which are being carefully explored. (1) To call for a breaking of relations with Soviet Russia, after an exhaustive documented review of the infractions (on the part of Russia) of the original agreement of 1933 which opened up diplomatic relations between the two nations. (2) To authorize the blockade of the China coast, whether by our fleet or Chiang's navy; and to utilize Chiang's troops in war with the Chinese Communists.

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BIPARTISAN FOREIGN POLICY: Demands for a bipartisan arrangement have appeared on Capitol Hill, but critics point to the example which the British Parliament has set in this crisis. Opposition Leader Winston Churchill agreed to hold off any serious moves against the Labor Government until Mr. Attlee returns to London -- but that is all Churchill has conceded. It is very conspicuous that Mr. Attlee has brought along with him to Washington no member of the Opposition.

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THE UN: The "common man" has shown a tendency to be dissatisfied with that cure-all of human ills, the United Nations, in the past few troublesome days. We wonder what the man-in-the-street would say if he knew of the following little prank played by the UN and the British. Paul Ward of the Baltimore Sun (December 3) described a speech given on December 2 by Kenneth Younger, head of the British delegation to the UN Assembly. The speech advocated appeasement of the Chinese Communists and was given, significantly, to the Foreign Policy Association in New York. Ward reports that it was broadcast to the world in 30 languages, including Russian and Chinese, by the UN's own radio division which employed the facilities of our own

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Voice of America. The broadcast, Ward notes, "chose to ignore the parts in which he (Younger) stressed that Britain and the United States are defying Communist aggression and instead emphasized" other parts in which he spoke scornfully of those who regard what is now happening in Korea, Indo-China and Malaya as a "Moscow plot"; and warned against any "crude attempt" to turn the people of Asia against Communism.

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A NEW COMMITTEE: Word has got about that one of the most celebrated Leftist figures who appeared before the Tydings Committee last spring may face a less lenient body ere long. Important evidence and witnesses whom Tydings kept from offering testimony before the "whitewash" Committee last spring have been rounded up and a case, legally speaking, is reported to be now ready. Some say the case is even stronger than that presented against Alger Hiss. The question is: will the Department of Justice act, or will this evidence have to be first presented to a new Un-American Activities Committee?

For creation of such a body is now under way. Thorough and far-reaching investigation of Communist spies, agents, provocators and plain job holders, in and out of government, with a re-examination of the Tydings Committee findings and the manner of enforcing the McCarran Anti-Communist Act, is taking shape in the Senate's Judiciary Committee. The project is covered in Senate Resolution 366, sponsored by Senator Eastland (D., Miss.) for himself and Senators McCarran (D., Nev.), O'Conor (D., Md.), Wiley (R., Wis.), Ferguson (R., Mich.), Jenner (R., Ind.), and Langer (R., N.D.). In substance, and practical effect, the Senate would set up its own Un-American Activities Committee within the framework of the Judiciary Committee, often called the "judicial arm" of the Senate, and maintaining the most direct contact with the Department of Justice and the judicial arm of the Government.

In a word, either the Committee, or a sub-committee thereof, would be authorized to make "a complete and continuing study and investigation of (1) the administration, operation and enforcement of the (McCarran) Internal Security Act; (2) the administration, operation and enforcement of other laws relating to espionage, sabotage, and the protection of internal security; and (3) the extent, nature and effects of subversive activities in the U.S., its territories and possessions, including but not limited to espionage, sabotage and infiltration by persons who may seek the domination of the foreign government or organizations controlling the world Communist movement or any other movement seeking to overthrow the government of the U.S. by force and violence". While under the resolution the authority granted to the committee would cease on March 1, 1952, there is ample precedent for its extension by resolution at that time.

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ROSENBERG: Assistant Secretary of Defense Anna Rosenberg, who appears to face an uncertain battle in the Senate for confirmation, is having a torrid battle with the Army, Navy and Marine Corps over her efforts to lower physical and mental qualifications requisite for men drafted into the armed services. In her function as coordinator of manpower activities, she decides whether draftees or volunteers will be used to fill gaps made by war in the ranks of armed forces; lately she is trying to rewrite all of the qualifications for acceptance of draftees. Military officials say the end product of her proposed changes would be to push into the armed services all of the "sub-standard" men that industry does not want or will not take. They are prepared to carry their battle to Congress, at least to the extent of insisting that in any revision of the draft law, the legislators shall not accept only the pattern put forward by the Hungarian-born Assistant Secretary, who has long been close to key CIO men. Meantime, opposition to her confirmation for a variety of reasons, including the contention she lacks qualifications and training for the job, is being felt in the Senate.

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Book Events

Invasion 1944, by Lieutenant General Hans Speidel. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company. $2.75. Reviewed by Hoffman Nickerson.

From April to September, 1944, General Speidel was Chief of Staff of the German Army Group B, the territory of which included Holland, Belgium and France north of the Loire, first under Rommel, later under von Kluge and Model. An experienced soldier who is also a Ph.D. summa cum laude, he has written an absorbingly interesting story of the Anglo-American cross-channel invasion as seen by the German commanders in the West.

There is a Preface from the distinguished pen of Colonel Truman Smith, U.S.A. retired, who knew the author well when attaché in Berlin from '35 to '39. Colonel Smith noting with approval the accord between the practice of the pre-Hitler German Army and the precept of Washington, "Take only gentlemen for your officers," justly observes that "world history has usually disregarded the momentary tendency to condemn a defeated enemy"; and of course he deplores the murderous folly of "unconditional surrender".

The story of the German Command's decisions is intertwined with that of the conspiracy against Hitler, in which Rommel and Speidel were active and of which Rommel -- had he not been wounded -- was to have been the leader. The moral conflict in the minds of those German officers who were bound by their military oath to Hitler and nevertheless felt it to be their duty to rid Germany and the world of him is vividly presented. The story of what was practically Rommel's murder by Hitler after the failure of the conspiracy has been told in more detail in England in his biography by Desmond Young.

One suspects that the conspirators were too optimistic about what might have happened after a surrender in the West followed by continued resistance to the U.S.S.R. in the East. According to Speidel, although Rommel admitted that the terms "would be unsparing and hard", he nevertheless "hoped for a measure of statesmanlike insight . . . in the Allied (i.e., the Anglo-American) deliberations". In 1944 such hopes would almost certainly have been disappointed.

On the purely military side, the large and increasing number of students of war will always welcome authoritative statements of what was happening "on the other side of the hill" among their enemies. While defeated generals, of course, complain bitterly of their own difficulties, still there is usually more frankness in what they say than there is among the victorious leaders -- Bernard Shaw notes that the rush to get into a theatre to see a good show is always less than the rush to escape from a burning building. Thus the author insists upon the shortcomings of the Germans in France in '44, their insufficient numbers and inadequate fortifications, their lack of mechanical transport, their weakness at sea and in the air, especially in air-ground cooperation, most of all in the rigid defensive strategy insisted upon by Hitler.

On the other hand, Rommel correctly estimated in advance the probable Allied landing places, and later calculated within a small margin of error the time when the Allied forces would be able to break out of their bridgehead to begin open warfare across France.

The "Desert Fox", as the British warmly agree, was a chivalrous opponent. We cannot be too often reminded that all German officers were not the demons pictured by propagandists of whom we are now ashamed.

Hoffman Nickerson is the author of The Turning Point of the Revolution, Burgoyne in America, Can We Limit War?, The Armed Horde, 1793-1939, Arms and Policy, 1939-1944, and other books.

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